

April 16, 2008

Senator Abel Maldonado  
California State Senate District 15  
State Capital, Room 4082  
Sacramento, CA 94249-0001

**SUBJECT: GROVER BEACH ISSUES**

Dear Senator Maldonado,

I concur with my colleagues and extend my personal thank you for taking your valuable time to meet with this contingency from Grover Beach. Opportunities like this arranged through the League of California Cities are important for municipalities. Your positive attitude toward San Luis Obispo County and Grover Beach secures from me continued support of your political endeavors.

I am in agreement with the outline letter of the Council's recently adopted goals and work tasks submitted to you. I would like to further expound on several of the issues that I had extensive involvement in. Without a doubt, the economic future of Grover Beach lies in the successful development of steady streams of tax income into the City's coffers.

As pointed out in the City's goals, we have identified Pacifica Hosts, Inc. to build and operated the beachfront hotel. There are additional offerings for hotel projects in our City. The main obstacle is that all fall within the Coastal Commission review. We have also had threats of lawsuits from several non-profits, including the notorious "Sierra Club". It has injected heavy financial support for a candidate in our District 3 Supervisor Elections of nearly \$100,000. Its ultimate goal is to close down the beach to vehicle traffic. It makes no hesitation of threatening lawsuits to achieve its goal. This would devastate Grover Beach and the surrounding communities economic future. What is your

position on large donations to candidates from non-profit organizations in non-partisan elections?

The downtown **West Grand Avenue** business corridor provides an outstanding opportunity to develop a strong sales tax base. I recently completed a 5-month survey of the corridor to obtain long-over due information on its make-up. I wrote and published a detailed report, *A Field Study of the West Grand Avenue Business Corridor*, at my own expense and provided copies to the City. I feel we often have the abilities to do many projects in-house rather than outsourcing to consultants. I'm providing you a copy of my work.

It has been well received by local businesses and the community at-large. As a result of it, a downtown business association is currently in the development stage. The organizers have met with City staff to discuss their objectives and seek help as to potential infrastructure improvements by the City. My request to you is for any funding available to improve our downtown situation. We lack adequate street lighting to the point it's unsafe at night for driving and pedestrian travel. A successful business corridor needs to be well lighted. The City also needs to make pedestrian improvements as to benches and landscaping along the corridor, not unlike what was done in Arroyo Grande. Opening up rear parking to allow free flowing travel from one block to another is another suggestion. All of the above contribute to a healthy downtown business atmosphere. Any financial help from you would be highly welcomed.

I take pride in being directly involved on the committee that worked on the Housing Element submitted to the Department of Housing and Community Development, along with Mayor Shoals, City Manager Perrault, Community Development Director Hansen, and several staff members. Affordable housing is crucial to the future of our county as a whole. The State mandates quotas to the government entities, which can be often difficult to achieve. What we must not overlook is the large segment of affordable housing that already exists within our

cities, counties and the State, the mobile home parks. Ironically, the licensing of the individual units falls under HCD. I think their protection and future need to be addressed at the state level. Your help in the matter would be greatly appreciated. I've enclosed information and requests from several mobile home park representatives for your purview.

Did you know that in San Luis Obispo County there are 72 parks with 4,318 spaces? In Grover Beach, there are 4 parks with a 170 spaces. Retirees, senior citizens and individuals on fixed incomes occupy many of the spaces. First as a real estate/mortgage broker, later as a concerned citizen, finally as an elected official, I have been involved in their cause for nearly twenty years. They need your support. It is really a State problem that transcends local boundaries. They not only would like rent control protection, but in the case of conversion, some kind of fair market value guarantee for their units.

The **AMTRAK Train Station** holds the key to the future tourism in Grover Beach. The bus and train facilities need to be combined as one on the west side of railroad tracks. As citizens at large, several others and myself presented an acceptable solution to the dilemma during the bus station study in early 2004 at a cost of about ½ million dollars using the existing site. The consultant, Wilbur Smith Associates, favored a large parking area south between the existing station and the RV Park beyond. The problem lies in that the whole area is swamp. It could take upwards of \$3 million to pursue this choice.


In California, **AMTRAK** is in partnership with CAL-TRAINS. **AMTRAK** is responsible for providing the trains. CAL-TRAINS is responsible for the operations and maintenance, including sustaining any losses occurred. The good news is that the Surf-liner train is the second most successful operation in the **AMTRAK** system, following the northeast corridor line. We need state money for the combining of the bus and train operation. We also need CAL-TRANS to provide signage at both Highway 101 and Highway 1 promoting the

train station at its destination point in Grover Beach. Frankly, we need your influence in Sacramento to accomplish these goals.

Finally, a new danger has surfaced on the horizon regarding water. It's the very real potential invasion of Quagga mussels to our waterways, which dually serve as drinking water sources and recreational water facilities. They are non-native freshwater mussels from Eastern Europe that clog waterways, undermine healthy lake ecosystems, ruin boat engine cooling systems, and financially burden water resource agencies. They are prolific breeders with one female producing 1,000,000 offspring annually. They were first introduced into the U.S. by ships in the Great Lakes region in 1989. They have caused millions of dollars of maintenance to that area annually.

I'm known as the "water boy" on the Council, as I represent the City on the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Water Resources Advisory Committee (WRAC) and the San Luis Obispo County Flood Control and Water Conservation District Zone 3 Advisory and Technical Advisory Committees (Zone 3). WRAC has unanimously voted for the Board of Supervisors to institute a prevention program. Zone 3 has agenzized the matter for discussion for its next meeting regarding any potential intrusion of Lopez Lake, which is Grover Beach's principal water source.

It is a statewide problem. Currently, lakes in San Diego and Benito Counties have been infested. These areas have not been quarantined. They need to be isolated. There is no completely successful eradication known once introduced. The carrier is the fishing boats that travel from lake to lake. Prevention can be costly, but maintenance after the fact can be devastating. Lake Casitas is banning outside boats. Lake Cachuma is instituting boat high-pressure wash down stations prior to entering the waterways. Lopez Lake and Santa Margarita Lake are at greatest risk during a bass fishing tournament, as bass boats compete from lake to lake within the state.

I've brought it to your attention as a statewide remedy is needed. Thank you again for this opportunity to meet with you. Please feel free in contacting me regarding any issues before you. 

Sincerely,

 Chuck Ashton  
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